



ROAD TO RESIDENCY

EVERY STEP, EVERY MILESTONE, EVERY MONTH.

Even though the journey to a U.S. residency can take two or more years, time is precious. How can you make the best use of it? The key to reaching your destination is getting the right directions. *Our two-year plan is exactly that.**



*Kaplan does not guarantee placement into any residency program.

TWO YEARS

BEFORE THE MATCHSM

January

Research the requirements for legal entry into the United States including the F-1 visa for full-time study. Prepare your application for admission and supporting documents for the I-20. Budget for the exam, prep options, and your travel expenses.

Determine in what order you will plan to take your USMLE exams. For instance, some students prefer to take their Step 2CK exam prior to Step 1. Speak with a medical advisor to confirm our recommended timeline is right for you.

February

Visit the [ECFMG \(Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates\) website](#) to learn how to complete your certification. Apply for authorization to register for the USMLE® once you have a solid plan for your USMLE prep. This is your first step towards U.S. licensure.

Tip: The ECFMG requires that you have graduated from an accredited school listed on the [International Medical Education Directory \(IMED\)](#). Find out if your school is qualified.

Don't forget! Start thinking about which specialties you want to apply to. Your choice will help set goals for your USMLE scores as well as residency program targets.

Check out our [Residency Secrets blog](#) for more on medical specialties, such as Internal Medicine or Family Medicine.

February - August

Begin preparing for [USMLE Step 1](#) (average 6-9 months of study time). It's important to create a study plan that works for you. Reach out to a trusted peer who has gone through the process or consider making an appointment with a medical advisor. Kaplan Medical offers a free advising session to get you started. You can request an appointment [here](#).

Tip: USMLE Step 1 focuses on basic sciences, such as biochemistry and anatomy, which you learned about in medical school. To do well on this exam, you need a strong knowledge base in the basic sciences and must be able to integrate concepts across disciplines.

September

Take Step 1. Testing centers are located throughout the country.

Tip: All test takers must apply to take the USMLE, and you can do so through the ECFMG®. Information on how to apply and what fees are associated with the exams are on the [USMLE website](#).

October-February

Begin prepping for [Step 2 CK](#) (average 4-6 months of study time).

Tip: If you're studying at a Kaplan center, get involved in your community. Now is a good time to choose your specialty and find out where you would like to practice medicine in the future. Have you connected with our communities on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)?

November

Find out where Step 2 CS is being offered in the U.S. and [schedule your exam](#). Spots fill up quickly.

Tip: Step 2 CS is administered in five select locations across the country. Preparing for this exam is important because it is a pass/fail exam that tests how you communicate with patients by U.S. standards. It is significant that you understand English well and speak it clearly but it is not an English proficiency exam. [Learn what to say and how to say it](#).

December

Are there any clinical work opportunities in your area? Some programs prefer candidates with U.S. experience, but it's not required. Research work, writing, and volunteering are also great assets to your residency applications.

Tip: Clinical experience is available all over the country. If you can secure some time in a clinical setting, it may help boost your application. [Check out some of the options on our website](#).

ONE YEAR

BEFORE THE MATCHSM

January

Do you know what kind of medicine you want to practice? If not, it's time to research specialties and programs. Consider USMLE scores, your education, your goals, and your personality when making your decision.

Tip: In your home country, you may have been practicing pediatrics or neurology. The NRMP's

survey, [located here](#), is a good indication of what scores are recommended for competitive specialties in the U.S. Get to know your options in family medicine and internal medicine from the American Academy of Family Physicians or American Board of Internal Medicine.

February

Take Step 2 CK. Testing centers are located throughout the country.

Tip: Some IMGs may opt to take Step 3 after completing all other Steps (before applying to The Match). It could strengthen your residency application if you have deficiencies (for example, a gap between your most recent clinical experience and application to residency). Doing so prior to residency makes you eligible to apply for the H1B Visa. Your medical advisor will tell you more.

March

Start working on your personal statements. Don't be afraid to pull from your own experiences in medicine and education to craft personal anecdotes that show your true character. Make sure you have several proofreaders.

Tip: Your personal statement is your only opportunity to illustrate who you are outside of your USMLE scores before your interview. It's an excellent time to showcase your expertise, patient experience, passion for medicine, etc. Our blog, [Residency Secrets](#), offers excellent advice on personal statements. Learn more and [join the conversation!](#)

April-May

Take Step 2 CS. There are only five testing centers throughout the country and spots fill up quickly, so schedule your appointment as soon as possible.

Tip Plan to travel to your scheduled test center location at least a day before your exam. Some local hotels will have special rates for exam takers. Additional travel information for the exam locations is available from the [CSEC \(Clinical Skills Evaluation Collaboration\)](#).

June

Request your ERAS token through the [Online Applicant Status and Information System](#) (OASIS) administered through the ECFMG. The token is a 14-digit alphanumeric code that grants you access to your application.

Tip Remember that there are fees associated with the ERAS. Each application has a cost. Review all of your materials and ensure your application is in place. The [AAMC checklist is a key resource](#) to help you move through the process.

July-August

Begin uploading your letters of recommendation (LORs), personal statements, and your completed application through MyERAS®. Ask your writers to submit through the AAMC's Letters of Recommendation Portal (LoRP) once it opens.

Tip Remember that letters from your home country are fine, but obtaining at least one letter from a U.S. physician is highly recommended to improve your chances of receiving an invitation to interview. Remember that letters may only be submitted [electronically through the LoRP](#) (no mailed letters).

Make sure you're making [smart decisions](#) about your future today. They will ensure you're starting residency this time next year.

September

You can submit your personal statements, letters of recommendation, and required USMLE scores (Steps 1, 2 CK, and 2 CS) to the residency programs you specify beginning on September 15th. ECFMG certification is also recommended to apply. Applying early with a complete application is strongly encouraged.

Tip Register with the NRMP (National Residency Match Program). Even after you have submitted your ERAS application, you are not eligible to Match until you have received an NRMP candidate number.

October-January

It's time for interviews. Study your programs in depth (and develop a firm handshake).

Tip There are many [tips and strategies](#) you can use to make a great impression on interview day. Be courteous to everyone and show up with a great attitude. Have talking points prepared that explain why you're a good fit for that specific program and address any gaps in your application. Send thank you notes within a week of your interview.

February

Submit your Rank Order Lists (ROL) through ERAS.

Tip Ensure you only rank programs where you've had an interview. It's best to rank based on your interest level, not how you think they will rank you. Honest rankings have better outcomes for both sides—[we promise](#).

March

IT'S MATCH WEEK!

Tip The fear, the joy, the anticipation. It's very emotional. You've worked hard to get to this point. If you or your friends matched, you may feel as though you're floating on air. Congratulations! [How will you celebrate?](#)

Some programs fill positions in their programs outside of The Match as well, so be sure to speak to your medical advisor about what options you have, if you did not match.

July

Residency starts.

Tip Each program will require you to take and pass [Step 3](#) by the end of your first year of residency. It's a good idea to get a head start on it before your residency begins!

Now it's your turn. Contact your med advisor.

Take your calendar to the next level by getting a custom study plan that works for you. Our med advisors are here to help get you on the road to residency today. Reach out. We'll reply within several days.

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